

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7383

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, BG, IN

SUBJECT: G.K. REDDY ON "ISLAMIC PRESSURES" AT COLOMBO NAC

REF: NEW DELHI 10819

1. IN A CURIOUS ARTICLE IN THE HINDU, JULY 27, WELL-CONNECTED DELHI HINDU BUREAU CHIEF G.K. REDDY COMMENTED ON ATTEMPTS BY LEADERS OF "SOME ISLAMIC COUNTRIES IN ASIA AND AFRICA TO FUNCTION AS A CLOSELY-KNIT GROUP WITHIN THIRD WORLD FORUMS TO MAKE THEIR VOICES FELT IN A MORE EFFECTIVE FASHION." REDDY SAYS THAT IF THIS IS IN THE DIRECTION OF "POSITIVE COOPERATION... WITHOUT ANY OVERTONES OF MILITANT PAN-ISLAMISM", OTHER COUNTRIES NEED NOT OBJECT.

2. REDDY SAYS, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE ISLAMIC STATES WOULD "BE ABLE TO ADOPT A MONOLITHIC APPROACH TO ANY CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES. SO THERE IS NO DANGER OF ANY DIVISIVE NOTE BEING STRUCK BY THEM AT THE COLOMBO SUMMIT FOR PROPAGANDA."

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GATING A DISTINCTLY ISLAMIC POINT OF VIEW ON ANY MAJOR

PROBLEM. THE MAIN CONCERN AT THIS CONFERENCE WOULD BE TO PREVENT THE ERUPTION OF BILATERAL DISPUTES INTO OPEN CONTROVERSIES DURING THE PLENARY SESSIONS OF THE COMMITTEES DEALING WITH POLITICAL ISSUES. SINCE THE ISLAMIC COUNTRIES HAVE MORE THAN THEIR SHARE OF BITTER WRANGLES, THERE CAN BE NO UNITED APPROACH BY THEM EXCEPT ON ISSUES LIKE THE CONTINUED ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ARAB COUNTRIES OR THE EVILS OF RACISM OVER WHICH THERE IS COMPLETE UNANIMITY OF OPINION AMONG THE NON-ALIGNED NATIONS. THERE IS NO UNDUE CONCERN IN INDIA THAT THE PULLS AND COUNTER-PULLS OF ISLAMIC POLITICS ARE GOING TO BE A SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT FOR OTHERS AT THE COLOMBO SUMMIT CONFERENCE."

3. COMMENT: WE READ THIS RATHER CRYPTIC ARTICLE, WHICH APPEARS APROPOS OF NOTHING AT ALL IN THE INDIAN PRESS, AS AT LEAST A PARTIAL CONFIRMATION OF SPECULATION IN REFTEL THAT THE GOI HAS AT LEAST THOUGHT ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF BANGLADESH RAISING ITS BILATERAL PROBLEMS WITH INDIA, AND BEING SUPPORTED BY OTHER MUSLIM STATES. WE'RE NOT SO SURE THE GOI IS WRITING THE PROBLEM OFF AS LIGHTLY AS REDDY SUGGESTS. INDO-PAKISTAN DIFFERENCES OVER APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE ON A SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONE COULD ALSO BE A SOURCE OF SOME CONCERN FOR THE INDIANS SHOULD ANOTHER MUSLIM STATE RAISE THE PAKISTAN VERSION AT THE NAC AND LOBBY, WITH ISLAMIC STATE SUPPORT, FOR INSERTION INTO THE NAC DECLARATION.

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